



## Board Report

**File #:** 2020-0668, **File Type:** Informational Report

**Agenda Number:** 15.

### PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE JANUARY 20, 2021

SUBJECT: COUNTYWIDE PLANNING MONTHLY MAJOR PROJECT STATUS REPORT

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

#### RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE the monthly status of major capital projects that are currently in the Alternatives Analysis and Environmental Planning phase.

#### BACKGROUND

At the last monthly update to the Planning and Programming Committee in November 2020 (Legistar File #2020-0667) the Committee directed staff to return in January 2021 with a more comprehensive status report, specifically:

- a. Directors Hahn and Dupont-Walker requested a West Santa Ana Branch project strategic update covering environmental clearance, third-party engagement, P3 timing, project funding plan and project organization including the project lead and the related roles and responsibilities.
- b. Director Hahn requested more details on meetings being conducted in both the Green Line to Torrance and the Eastside Corridor Extension.

#### DISCUSSION

The West Santa Ana Branch (WSAB) project scope and schedule are ambitious, and the Metro Board of Directors has asked Metro staff to take all possible measures to further accelerate delivery and maximize the scope that can be delivered in the first decade of the Measure M program. Metro is embarking on an ambitious P3 delivery approach to drive innovation and performance and minimize risk while maximizing budget and schedule attainment and ensuring the integrity of the environmental process.

The project presents numerous environmental and technical design challenges. There are a range of third parties with which Metro will have to coordinate to resolve a variety of complicated permits and approvals before final design and construction can begin, including but not limited to, Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR), Caltrans, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, State Historic Preservation Office, Utilities Providers etc.

The challenge of achieving these ambitious goals has led Metro to approach the project through an integrated, coordinated, multidisciplinary strategy to ensure all these moving parts fit together into a cohesive, successful plan. Metro has established various teams, each of which are responsible for progressing individual components of the project strategy. Work efforts that are typically sequential have been overlapped, with the goal of reducing overall timeframes (though this approach also requires a higher level of staff and consultant resources, and increased levels of staff coordination).

In response to the Directors Dupont-Walker's and Hahn's questions at the November 2020 committee meeting, Attachment A describes a comprehensive, interdependent strategy that Metro staff have been following to develop and deliver the WSAB project. It addresses the following:

1. Metro Teams' Roles & Responsibilities
2. Overall Project Schedule
3. Environmental Clearance
4. Third-Party Engagement
5. Design Efforts
6. Enabling Works Sequence
7. P3 Timing
8. Project Funding Plan

This monthly report also summarizes the responses to the November Planning & Programming Committee WSAB project requests in the PowerPoint slides included in Attachment B. The status of CPD's other key projects is summarized in the PowerPoint slides included in Attachment C. Specific project meeting dates and activities are described as follows.

- **Green Line to Torrance**

The EIR scoping period will be held for a 45-day review period starting on January 29 and extending through March 14 with virtual scoping meetings scheduled on February 24 and 27, 2021.

In advance of the scoping period, a series of stakeholder meetings have been held to refresh the community on the project. The team has met with all three cities in the study area which include:

- City of Torrance (November 10),
- City of Redondo Beach (November 18 and December 14)
- City of Lawndale (November 19)

All three cities provided guidance and shared topics of concern for the project that will be shared during the scoping period and during the environmental process. These concerns included looking further into community and traffic impacts potentially identified in the environmental process and working with the local stakeholders to identify ways to minimize them either through design of the alternatives being studied or proposed mitigation measures.

Additionally, the team is having on-going meetings with other stakeholders including

- BNSF Railroad. Several meetings have been held with Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad. On December 2, BNSF shared their current operation and the need to maintain their current/future capacity in the area. They provided guidance on changes to the conceptual alignment in the shared Right-Of-Way (ROW) and were open to on-going discussions as the project progresses through the environmental and advanced conceptual engineering phase.
- Right of Say (December 9). The Right of Say group shared their concerns with the project alternative along the Metro-owned ROW and their intention to participate in the scoping meetings and inform the environmental process.

Stakeholders meetings with the following have been scheduled:

- South Bay Metro Service Council (January 8)
- South Bay COG Transportation Committee (January 11)
- Redondo Beach Unified School District (January 12)
- South Bay Bicycle Coalition (January 13)
- North Torrance Neighborhood Association (January 14)
- Redondo Beach Rotary Club (January 20).

- **Eastside Corridor Extension**

In February 2020 the Board approved the Washington Alternative and to proceed with CEQA only. Since that time, the Draft Advanced Conceptual Engineering (ACE) drawing have been developed and are now under review by internal departments and the Tunnel Advisory Panel. Supporting draft reports are being revised and submitted by the

engineering consultant.

Since the November Planning & Programming Committee meeting, staff has met with the following corridor cities to solicit their input on the Draft ACE in their respective jurisdictions:

- City of Whittier (November 18)
- City of Pico Rivera (December 15)
- City of Santa Fe Springs (December 21)

Subsequent meetings are being scheduled per the cities' requests. An update to the City of Whittier City Council Ad-hoc is tentatively scheduled for the first week of January. Pico Rivera city staff also requested a separate meeting to discuss a City-led Rio Hondo Bridge Expansion project and right-of-way needs for the Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2 project.

These meetings were generally attended by city managers, assistant city managers, department directors, and appropriate city staff. Meetings are being scheduled with the cities of Commerce and Montebello in January. Overall, there is general support for the project. Cities have provided preliminary input on the status of any city right-of-way improvements and/or abutting development projects. Cities will have an opportunity to continue their review of the Draft ACE and submit comments by mid-January.

Contract Modifications for the environmental and engineering consultants are nearing completion with an anticipated execution date in January. Meanwhile, the project continues to advance under the existing contracts.

The Board action in February 2020 also included the funding of an independent study to evaluate the needs of the San Gabriel Valley; the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments will be leading the study. Metro staff has worked closely with SGVCOG and has executed a Memorandum of Understanding to proceed with an RFP for professional services for the San Gabriel Valley Transit Study. Metro staff will continue to provide technical support as needed.

- **East San Fernando Valley LRT**

On December 3, 2020 the Board approved the certification of the Final EIR for the project. This concluded the CEQA environmental clearance of the project. Staff is now working with the Federal Transit Administration to secure the Record of Decision for the federal environmental clearance that is necessary to make the project eligible for federal construction funding grants.

Staff is also working on the scope of work and schedule for a Shared Right of Way Study that was directed by the Board at the December meeting and will return in February with a report on next steps for that study.

- **Sepulveda Transit Corridor**

The private sector PDA proposals which were received in August 2020 are nearing the completion of internal review led by Metro's Vendor/Contract Management Department. The multi-departmental proposal review team will bring one or two of the highest ranked proposal(s) back to the Board in early 2021 with a recommendation to award.

At that time, the Board is expected to review these recommendations over the course of two meetings regarding which firm(s) will be awarded a PDA contract from Metro. Staff plans to initially present the recommendation for the PDA to the Board and then return to the Board the following month for the action to award a contract to one or more private sector teams. This will allow the public sufficient time to review the Board report, learn more about the procurement process and the factors that led to the recommendation for award and provide any comments to Metro or directly to the Metro Board.

The selected PDA project proposals will then be advanced into environmental review that will be formally initiated through public scoping meetings. The schedule for these scoping meetings will be presented as a part of the Board's

review on the recommended PDA awards.

- **NoHo to Pasadena BRT**

The NoHo to Pasadena BRT Draft EIR comment period began on October 26 and concluded on December 28. The comments received are currently being reviewed and are in the process of being summarized. Currently the most challenging issues include community concerns over parking loss along Olive Ave. in Burbank and a lack of community consensus on a BRT design in Eagle Rock. Comments pertaining to the Eagle Rock section of the project have been heavily in favor of routing the BRT along Colorado Blvd. rather than on the SR-134 freeway. However, the community has expressed concerns over impacts to the buffered bike lanes, medians, traffic, and parking.

In January, staff are re-engaging with key stakeholders to work through these remaining issues. In Eagle Rock specifically, a stakeholder roundtable is being planned to discuss BRT design concepts on Colorado Blvd. and try to strike a balance between some of the competing priorities expressed by community members. The primary goal of this additional stakeholder outreach is to help inform the next step in the process, which is to develop a recommended LPA. Key details contained in the LPA will include a final project alignment, station locations, and a specific BRT configuration along each segment of the alignment (i.e. center-running, side-running, curb-running bus lanes).

Staff currently intends to return to the Metro Board in March 2021 with two recommendations, including 1) selecting the LPA and 2) exercising the Preliminary Engineering option contained in our existing environmental services contract. If the Board approves both recommendations, staff will begin work on the Final EIR and advancing the selected BRT design.

**NEXT STEPS**

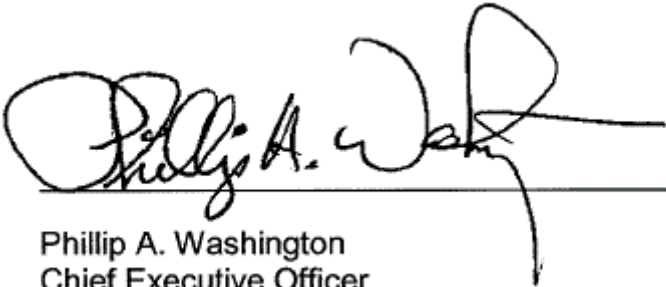
CPD will provide an update on current project activities every month.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A - West Santa Ana Branch Project Update & Responses  
Attachment B - Summary Slides for West Santa Ana Branch Corridor

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